

MilAtari Limited Edition

Vol. VIII, No. X
October 1989

This Month:

General Meeting

Sat., October 21st, 12:00 Noon
Greenfield Park Lutheran Church
1236 S. 115th St., West Allis

Exec. Board Meeting

Sun., October 29th, 7:30pm
Pepino's, 9909 W. Appleton

Next Month:

General Meeting

Sat., Nov. 25th, 12:00 Noon
Greenfield Park Lutheran Church
1236 S. 115th St., West Allis

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Michelle Gross

From The President

Your Executive Board has been very busy over the summer months in order to implement some changes for this fall. The most noticeable change in our meetings will be that as of this month's meeting MilAtari Ltd. will be accepting Master Card and Visa in lieu of cash or check as a convenience to our members. No longer will you have to worry about carrying huge sums of money to and from the meetings, nor will you have to worry about not having huge sums of money to carry. We of course, will continue to accept your personal check as well as cash for your purchases and membership dues.

We have also accepted the request of CSA Unlimited, the guys who were at our September General Meeting selling their wares, to come to our General Meetings in the future on an occasional basis. We are accepting requests from any vendors who wish to come to a meeting to sell computer related items, and your board has set a policy on reviewing any and all requests, so if there is an interest, please contact a member of the board for more information. We are also very interested in feedback from members on this issue, so let your opinion be known to a member of the board. Please remember that we are here to serve the members!

Some of you may have noticed a slight change in the way guests and new members were greeted at their first visit to our last general meeting. We have started a New Member and Guest Orientation corner to introduce newcomers to our club's activities and staff of volunteers. Our goal is to make the people feel like part of the group immediately and also find out if they have any particular questions or problems, and if so direct them to the appropriate member for immediate help. My personal thanks to Pat Wickstrom for making this a success. We are looking for other members who would be willing to donate one hour (that's it!) during a meeting in the next few months. It is a good way to support your club without having to dedicate a lot of time, and it's also an opportunity to meet and help new members.

Now for a late breaking story: Due to the keen observation skills of Joe Sliker, we have found that Milwaukee Public Schools has purchased about 400 STs for use in their Chapter 1 program. I have contacted the coordinator of this program to get more information on exactly how the STs are being used, and also to find out if our club can offer them any assistance. This is a great opportunity, as well as some long awaited good news, for Atari and MilAtari Ltd. I will be sure to keep you posted as I find out more information.

That's it for my report this month. Be sure to make the October meeting, and take note that November's meeting is a deviation from our normal 3rd Saturday. We will be meeting on Thanksgiving weekend, so mark your calendars now!

See you at the meeting!

Michelle

MilAtari Ltd.
 The Milwaukee Area
 Atari Users Group
 Post Office Box 14038
 West Allis, WI 53214

Membership in MilAtari Ltd. is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are \$20.00 for individuals, \$25.00 per family and includes a one year subscription to this newsletter and access to club libraries. Membership applications may be obtained at the monthly meeting or by writing to the club Secretary at the above address.

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Piracy of legally copyrighted software, hardware or documentation is hereby recognized as illegal and a detriment to the goals of MilAtari Ltd., and shall not be sanctioned by MilAtari Ltd.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Due to insurance regulations, smoking is strictly forbidden anywhere on the premises of the Greenfield Park Lutheran Church. Failure to comply will result in our immediate eviction. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

The MilAtari Welcome Wagon

Please give a warm welcome to our newest members. First we have ST owners Lynwood Brawn, Bob Hartzell and Mark Jones. And last but not least, say hello to Gerry Feid, involved in both the 8-bit and ST worlds.

We hope that you find your involvement with MilAtari to be fun and informative, as many of our veteran members have. Glad to have you aboard!

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Dick Laudenbach

Tetris

Mfg: Spectrum HoloByte
Type: Action/strategy game
Overall Rating: A "Must buy"

Tetris is one of those deceptively simple games that are easy to learn and difficult to master. You lose this game because of something you did yourself and not what the program did to you. Then you try again because you know you can beat your last score and the next thing you realize is that several hours have passed unnoticed. That is what makes Tetris so addictive. While one game may take anywhere from 5 to 20 minutes to complete, hours can pass without notice because of the concentration involved.

Tetris is played in a rectangular box 10 squares wide and 20 squares high. The simple object of the game is to arrange the 7 various four-square combinations into complete 10 square lines across the box. When a line is completed, it disappears from the box and any pieces above it drop down to replace it. The number of completed lines is shown in your score box along with the numeric score you get. Every time you finish 10 lines the background picture behind the playing field changes. The pictures, while not distracting, are still very nice to look at and to some extent are even more of an incentive to do well than having the high score in the "Top Ten Comrades" list. These pictures depict scenes of Russian life and the Russian Space program.

The 7 four-square playing pieces consist of a red "Z", a red "T", a red "L", a yellow "S", a yellow "L", a blue square and a gray reversed "L". These pieces drop randomly one at a time from the top of the playing field and continue to fall until they reach the bottom of the box or another playing piece. The game ends when any piece reaches the top of the playing field and can't fall any further.

This is one of the few ST games that doesn't use either the mouse or joystick controls. Reminiscent of some of the older 8-Bit games, this game is played entirely with just 4 keys. The keys are the left arrow key for moving left; the right arrow key for (you guessed it) moving right; the down key for cutting control of the piece, so it falls straight down faster; and the 5 key for rotating the pieces. Your total score is determined by both the total number of pieces played and how fast they reach the bottom. That is basically all there is to playing Tetris.

What? You want more? Okay! How about 10 levels of starting speed and 5 levels of beginning heights or 50 different starting combinations. The game is preset for level 5 and height 0 but until you have played the game for a while, start at level 0. Starting at level 5 and 6 the action is already fast and furious. Starting out at level 0 will give you time to figure out the game and you will go up in levels during the game as your score increases.

More? Once you have this part mastered you can play the advanced mode which doubles the speed of each level. Still more? Try the tournament mode. Here up to 6 players can compete against each other. While the pattern of falling pieces changes every game in normal play they will remain the same for all players in the tournament mode. It also has its own list of scores and you can set time limits for play in this mode. If they qualify, scores from the tournament mode will also appear on the list of "Top Ten Comrades".

There are other features such as sound on/off, help, statistics, etc. While they are nice to have, they aren't that exciting except for the repeat mode on the height box. This feature allows you to replay the same exact previous game in the normal play mode. A good prac-

tice tool.

Now for some hints. This game is a good lesson for two very old maxims. They are "haste makes waste" and "he who hesitates is lost". While you can increase your score through the frequent use of the down arrow key, it is a quick way to end your game if you misjudge where it will drop the piece. Once you push this key, you can no longer control the direction of the piece. Once you reach upper levels or higher heights, you will have little time to hesitate while deciding which direction to go with a piece. The best advice is to start out at the lowest level and try to complete solid lines as soon as possible. Avoid having the height of the middle of the board become too high compared with the rest of the playing field because that is where the pieces will first appear and once they reach the top, you're finished. Also, while you always want to try completing solid lines as close to the bottom as possible, don't be afraid to complete a line above it with the pieces available rather than waiting for that one correct piece to complete the bottom row. I have seen people lose the game without completing even one line by waiting for the right piece.

The only two complaints I have with this program are with the packaging. While this game comes with a 12 page instruction manual, it says it is for the Macintosh Version and then includes a one page sheet for the Atari. The second complaint is even more infuriating. In the 12 page manual it gives instructions on how to make backup copies for the Macintosh. The Atari version is copy protected, although you can obtain a backup copy from Spectrum HoloByte for only \$10.00. Why? Despite these two complaints, I consider this to be an excellent product.

In conclusion, I want to recommend this game as a must for everyone's game collection. Spectrum HoloByte deserves a round of applause for finding this game. They might even consider bringing this game out for the 8-Bit machines.

Bob Carpenter

TV Sports: Football

Mfg: Cinemaware
Type: Sports simulation
Suggested retail price: \$49.95
Rating: Recommended

If you've had the desire to "put on the pads" and go out on the gridiron here's your chance...and you don't even have to worry about the Astroturf! In TV Sports: Football (from now on called TVSF), you have the opportunity to pit your mind, and joystick, against a computer or human opponent. As you boot up the game, you are treated to the usual great-looking Cinemaware graphics. You then get to choose your teams which are listed on a giant clipboard. To choose a team, you move the pencil on the clipboard to the team that you want and press the fire button. Your opponent will do the same. After this, you will see a remarkable picture of the pre-game coin flip. I make mention of this only because of the number of football that decided to show the coin flip that look absolutely atrocious. After the winner of the coin flip decides whether to receive or kick off, the fun really starts.

On the field, you will see that the players are quite well drawn and are animated well. You can tell the player that is activated (has the ball) by the fact that the player is flashing. After you are tackled on the kickoff (it won't be long, your computer friends don't block well for punts and kickoffs!), you choose your offensive or defensive play.

The joystick interface of choosing the play was very well done and I was quite impressed with it. The screen is split up into 4 squares and one formation is in each square. For the offense, the squares are Kick, I-formation, Pro-Set, and Shotgun. For the defense, they are 3-4 defense, 4-3 defense, and 6-1 alignment. After picking the offense or defense, you then choose the particular

type. On the offense, it will show chalkboard type diagrams of where the particular players are supposed to go. In the beginning, it's best to go with one or two plays and know them very well and where everyone is supposed to be so that interceptions aren't quite so frequent. On defense, the squares are Run Outside, Run Inside, Pass Defense, and Blitz.

"If you've had the desire to...go out on the gridiron, here's your chance..."

After choosing the play for both offense and defense, the play begins. The players for the offense will go in their appointed routes. But, wait a minute, what do I DO? Unfortunately, if you don't intervene and do something, the computer will take over. While the computer player is better than I am, I didn't buy the game to be a pretty demo. To take over the play, once the ball is snapped, you can do one of two things. To run the football, just hold down the button before the snap and if the fire button is down when the snap happens, the ball is handed off to the nearest running back.

If you wish to pass (you Randy Wright clone, you!), pull the joystick back and the quarterback will fade back to pass. In order to pass, you must know where your receivers are going, lead your receivers (throw the ball in front of them so that they can catch it on the run), and throw to an open receiver. To throw the pass, hold the button down for as long as you think necessary to lead your receiver properly. After you let go of the button, an "X" will appear on the field. This is the catchable zone. If a receiver

(or defender) is in the catchable area, he may catch the football. Failure to do all of these things results in an incompletion or, worse, an interception.

If you are lucky enough to lead your team down the field for a touchdown, you will see a nice end-zone dance by the player that scored. Then another screen will appear that has the players lining up for an extra point. This screen is the same for field goals as well. The team attempting to block the kick has one player that they can move around where they choose. By pressing the fire button, he jumps in the air. To kick a field goal (or extra point), look at the picture of a football in the corner of the screen. When the kick is snapped, you must hold down the button until a white line is at the place you want on the football. If you are just kicking an extra point, you can have the line near the bottom of the football. The ball will go very high, but not very far. However, if you're attempting a medium to long field goal, it will be necessary to let the line approach the middle of the football. It really isn't that complicated at all. After a couple of hours, you should master how to move the players around and how to kick, at least, short field goals.

So that's pretty much the game. There are other options like changing a particular defensive player to BLITZ or MAN-to-MAN. Also you can have fumbles, the recovery being determined by who pressed the fire button first (yes, it is possible to beat the computer at that). Now, the bottom line, how do I rate this game? I'd give the game about a B+. Why not an A?

- 1) If you don't take over your offense or defense soon enough, the computer takes over for you (annoying)
- 2) If you don't choose a play soon enough, the computer will pick one for you based on your "previous tendencies" (also annoying)
- 3) For the human player, the computer determines whether a particular

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John Beck and Bob Carpenter

ST Disk Drive Anomaly

This article contains John Beck's explanation of the disk drive problem that I tried (in vain) to talk about last month. The problem was that the drive was unable to detect the presence of a new disk if two consecutive disks were write-enabled. In dumb terms (the only ones that I understand), the problem was because of the type of disk drive that I had installed when I had the ST repaired. I felt that this article was necessary because I had more response from club members on the five sentences I wrote on this subject than for the rest of my articles combined.

Thanks are also in order to Paul Bethke who came up to me at the September meeting because he had the same problem with a drive that had been installed and had fixed the problem in a similar way to the ones described by John below. It was nice to hear two different people who didn't know each other coming up with the same answer. It gave me more confidence to have my drive fixed.

Kids, don't try this at home. Leave this to professionals. Seriously, if you don't have a good background in electronics, don't try this. Also, if your drive is OK, leave it alone! If your drive is in perfect shape and you don't have electronics experience (like me), use this explanation as knowledge to keep stored away in case your drive is replaced.

If your drive is replaced, just do one simple thing to keep your sanity. Bring an ST formatted disk to the repair shop. When the repairman gives you the machine, ask him to plug it in. When the ST is ready to be booted, stick in your write-enabled disk (the black thing is covering the hole) into the ST. The machine should boot fine. Now take your disk out of the drive and stick it back in the machine and hit Escape. This normally will read the disk for a new directory because the disk has been changed (it's the same

disk, but the ST doesn't know that because it's only a dumb computer!). If the drive light went on after you pressed Escape, then your drive should be fine and you'll be happy and sane. However, if the bee shows up on the screen but the disk isn't read, then your repairman may have to put another drive in your machine.

"...some drive manufacturers sell 'smart drives' and others sell 'dumb drives'..."

You see, some drive manufacturers sell "smart drives" (explained by John) and others sell "dumb drives" (the ones you want in an ST). Hopefully, this explanation will save you the headache that I went through.

This problem with the disk drive results from the fact that even though disk drives can pass the information on whether a disk is in the drive or not, the ST's drive controller chip does not support this. So the ST determines whether a disk has been changed by looking at the write protect status of the drive. Since when a disk is not in the drive the switch, or photosensor, which senses the write protect status will be in the same state as when a disk is write protected, the ST assumes that if it checks the drive and sees that it is write protected the disk may have been changed. The problem occurs when a drive is too smart. If a disk is not in the drive some drives will suppress the write protect status. If this is the case, the ST will not recognize that a disk has been changed. This can be solved in several ways. One way is to take the disk out, write protect it and stick it back in (you can then take

the write protect off).

Another way is to take the disk drive apart and find the switch that lets the drive know whether a disk is in the drive. This switch can either be at the front of the drive by the switch for the write protect status or it may be at the back of the drive. Then determine whether the switch is shorted or open when a disk is in the drive. If the switch is a short when a disk is in, just permanently short out the switch. If the switch was open when a disk is in the drive, just remove the switch.

Now your drive won't be too smart for its own good. The last possible way would be to intercept the write protect and disk in drive signals between the drive and ST sending them to a circuit which would output the correct write protect status to the ST. (not recommended as this is the hard way around the problem)

Just to emphasize this again, the places that you may have to short out (or open) may be in entirely different spots depending on the make of the drive. Have someone with experience in electronics determine where the switch is on your particular drive (if it's having problems). I've had no problems with my internal drive since I had it permanently shorted out, about a week ago. Did I have reservations about someone doing a frontal lobotomy on my drive? You bet! However, I trusted that John knew what he was doing and everything has been fine since. You don't know how convenient the Escape key is when you change disks, until that option no longer works.

I say again that this is tricky stuff. The operation on the internal drive was an unqualified success. However, the external drive (a Teac brand drive) was more tricky as some things needed to be shorted and others opened. It wasn't entirely successful. Luckily, John can replace the old, fried switch with a new one for about two bucks, so I'm not concerned. By the way, the external drive works correctly and doesn't do anything bad, but it doesn't detect the Escape key always correctly.

Michelle Gross

Food for Thought

One of the 'benefits' of being in the position of President of a User Group is getting more information, or perhaps just having alternate sources possibly closer to the horse's mouth than a member or nonmember does. I would be negligent if I were not to share this with you so I've put together some thoughts of mine based on discussions I've had with various individuals, including local merchants, software reps, as well as my favorite source for printed information: User Group Newsletters.

One of the most confusing issues I have encountered personally as an Atari ST owner, is the European Software market. My family and I have waited months upon months for titles to be available in local stores while seeing them released overseas. Virginia of Computer Software Center alone can attest to the number of times we have gone into their store looking for a title we have seen available through mail order only to hear "It hasn't been released yet..." What's the story? Well after talking to a few different people who are in the business, I think I finally understand the situation somewhat, as well as the problems this European Software market has created for ST owners.

Apparently the European consumers, for whatever reason, are not quite as picky about bugs in their programs as we Americans are. Therefore, the developers are able to get their product out sooner to the Europeans, who we must also remember are big on the ST, thus enabling the developer to realize a profit more quickly. Over in the USA, we have knowledge of what is being released, and like our own children on Christmas morn, do not have the patience to wait to get our mitts on those goodies. So many of us unsuspecting souls order the European titles, (often without even being aware that the title is from overseas). What you end up with can be anything from a

perfectly acceptable piece of software to a game so bug ridden that even your five year old won't tolerate it, or due to the differences in hardware between Europe and us you may end up with a disk that will not work with your ST at all!

So now when you are at your favorite Computer Club Meeting and you are discussing the latest and greatest with your fellow members, you'll more than likely pass along the experience you just had with the game you couldn't wait to get to the US marketplace for. I'm sure you aren't going to drop another \$20-\$40 for the same title when it is finally released here, and you can probably bet your buddies are going to remember your experience when it hits the stores here.

When the title you've been waiting for finally is released in your home country, you can count on the price being a bit heftier than its European counterpart, especially after the "other"

version has been out for several months. If you have been patient enough to wait for the American version, when it does finally appear, the price differences creates yet another dilemma. Tetris, for instance is available through Spectrum HoloByte at a list price of around \$39.95, and I've seen the same title through mail order, most likely the European version, for \$15. It is awfully tempting to check out the \$15 version.

As you can see, soon enough the American companies aren't going to want to distribute titles for the ST, because of "weak sales." My intent is not to defend or attack their position, just to acknowledge that the situation does exist and that it is a problem for the ST community.

So, what can we do? Well, first of all, as hard as it is we must be patient and support the American mar-

ket. The only way to insure it will be here is to support it. I'm not saying it will be easy, or is it fair for us to be in this position, but if you want to make sure there will be new software titles available to us in the future, it is the only answer. Secondly, and most importantly, communicate with the software developers and distributors. They are more interested in what we have to say than you may think. If there is something you see out, but not for your machine, or not available here yet, write to them. Let them know what you think of their products! I think you will be pleasantly surprised at how well your ideas, comments, and yes, even criticisms are received.

Is the software market drying up for the ST?

Unfortunately, you all know the answer to that question, at least on a local level. I've noticed that among those local retailers who carry the ST line, the selections are getting fewer by the day. Are we going to suffer the same fate as our 8-bit friends?

Well, it seems there is still a substantial amount of 3rd party support for the ST nationally, and even the 8-biters are enjoying some new product support, but what about locally? I'm sure

that I am not the only one who is disappointed every time I go into a software store that does not support either of the Atari formats. Many major metropolitan areas have no stores that carry Atari software at all!

What can we do to prevent this from happening to us? Well, my suggestions on this may not be too popular, but it's time to face facts. I pride myself in being pennywise, as most of us "Power without the Price" owners probably are, but are we in turn being pound foolish by cutting off our local retailers for the sake of short term savings? Now I know that the mail order houses have some dynamite prices on software, but they can afford it, and for obvious reasons: they deal in quantity, and without the high overhead the

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Doug Raeburn

PacMania

Ah, the good old days! Remember the Golden Age of videogames? (Was it already 5 to 7 years ago?) Back then, Nintendo and Sega were only to be found in video arcades, and the hot machines to have were the Atari 5200 and the ColecoVision. And some of the classics of videogames were popular then, games like Donkey Kong, Pac-Man and Zaxxon.

Much has transpired since those days of yore. Nintendo and Sega are all the rage in the home market, while Atari has shifted its focus more to computers. And the arcade games are much more complex and sophisticated, with graphics to dazzle and action to thrill (and confound).

But, for all the razzle dazzle of the newcomers, the old classics still hold a place in my heart. And now, late '80s technology teams up with early '80s nostalgia in the new sequel to a favorite old classic, Pac-Mania.

The original Pac-Man is one of the best known videogames of all time. The rules were simple, the play engaging and the bright colors and music entertaining. It featured a two-dimensional maze lined with dots. The player was Pac-Man, a round yellow character with a voracious appetite, whose job it was to eat all the dots in the maze. Trying to stop Pac-Man were the ghosts, who could kill him simply by touching him. In each of the four corners of the maze was a power pill - when Pac-Man would eat the power pill, he could eat the ghosts for a short period of time. Upon clearing one maze, you would go on to another one, facing faster and smarter ghosts. Points were scored for eating dots, ghosts, fruit, etc. Play would continue until the player ran out of lives.

Pac-Mania is faithful to the basic concept of the original game, but with several differences. The original Pac-Man was a flat maze, and the entire maze could be seen at once. Pac-Mania

features an angled, 3-D-like perspective, and you can only see a small portion of the maze at any given time. Pac-Man now looks like a sphere instead of a flat circle, and the maze walls appear to grow out of the maze floor.

The basic play is similar to the original. Pac-Man once again tries to eat all of the dots in the maze, and the ghosts try to catch him. There are 4 power pills in each maze, and they also work as before. For each ghost that Pac-Man eats on one power pill, he gets progressively higher points. Occasionally, bonus fruit appears in the maze, and Pac-Man gets extra points for eating them.

In addition to the fruits, there are two special items that occasionally appear. One is a red ball - when Pac-Man eats it, he gets double points for anything he eats for the balance of that maze. The other is a green ball - when Pac-Man eats that one, his speed increases about fivefold for about 30 seconds or until his next life, which ever comes first.

Pac-Man has one additional capability over his ancestor - he can now jump! He can jump over ghosts, dots and power pills, but not over walls. Pac-Man will jump in whatever direction you are moving by pushing the joystick button. Aside from this, basic directional control is provided in a NSEW pattern by the joystick. And that is the extent of the controls, a welcome relief to the sometimes overly complex control layouts of other contemporary videogames.

The new perspective of the game adds additional challenge. You no longer have a complete overview of the maze, so you have to try to remember what areas you have cleared. Also, since you can't see where all of the ghosts are, it is more difficult to avoid them. They are often right on top of you before you even know they are

around.

An interesting effect of the 3-D look is the scrolling tunnels on the sides of the screen. In the original game, you could enter a tunnel on one side of the screen and come out on the other. In Pac-Mania, when you enter the scrolling tunnels, it appears that you are simply moving straight ahead, but you are actually moving to the other side of the maze. The appearance is that there are a series of mazes linked side-by-side by the tunnels, but they are actually the same maze. It gets a little disorienting at times, but you get used to it.

There are four different mazes to keep you entertained. The first looks like it is made of Legos (Block Town). The second has walls that look like floating neon lights (Pac-Man's Park). The third consists of square domed blocks (Sandbox Land). And the last consists of what looks like metal squares (Jungly Steps). Each maze is slightly different from the other. In the last maze, when moving downward, you seem to slide, therefore moving faster when moving down than when moving up.

I've told you how it works, so
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October ST SIG

MIDI SIG Conducted by Tom Bardenwerper & Friends

This month we'll look at the Roland MT-32 sound module and Sonus Super Score sequencer. In addition we'll look at several Public Domain MIDI programs that are now available, including a 32 track sequencer!

We'll also talk about the direction YOU would like to see this new SIG take; ie. learning how to operate MIDI software or synthesizers, maybe writing our own music or... who knows? I'll leave that up to you!

See you at the SIG,
Tom

Bob Marsolek

8-Bit PD Update

MilAtari 8-Bit Public Domain Library disks can be purchased by our members at \$2.50 per disk (\$3.50 for nonmembers). We also sell blank disks at \$4.50 for a package of ten. These charges cover the cost of media and handling. All proceeds from disk sales are put toward the cost of the Clubs activities.

MilAtari Ltd. supports the Shareware concept and strongly urges our members to send contributions to the authors of those programs, designed as Shareware, that they find useful. Only by our continued support can we expect these authors to keep on improving their programs and also writing new ones.

DISK 230

DISCAPE

Sound and Graphics Demo. Watch and listen to this unique demonstration and be amazed at the power and versatility of the Atari 8-Bit computer.

DISK 231

MyDOS v4.50

If you are just starting out with your Atari 8-Bit or if you have lots of experience with different operating systems, you will find MyDOS v4.50 a very useful tool. MyDOS is menu driven and very similar to, but a lot more powerful than Atari DOS 2.5. This full two-sided disk comes complete with docs and utilities. See the review on MyDOS v4.50 in the September MilAtari Ltd. Edition.

DISK 232

BOWL.BAS

Do you like to hear the thunder of a heavy ball crashing into the pins? Do you love the thrill of hitting strike after strike? If so, then you will love BOWL.BAS. This arcade bowling game can be played against a number of opponents or you against the computer. Hours of fun for all ages.

SAFRYLAN.BAS

If you think President Bush has it tough running the good ol' USA, you should try ruling Safry Land. Start out with some land, a few people, a few Safrys in the bank, and maybe some farm equipment. Establish mining operations, build factories and form a strong military. These are just some of the things you'll need to do in order to stay on top until retirement.

EARTH.OBJ

This is a neat little demo of a revolving planet seen from space.

OMNICOM.COM

This is an 80 column VT-100 emulator program that supports Capture, Kermit, and X-Modem.

Well that's my lineup for October, hope you enjoy them. If you are unsure about the contents of any disk in the 8-BIT PD Library, I'll be more than happy to demo it during the 8-BIT SIG before you purchase it. Also I will have some simple instructions on the use of the program library disks available for those who need them.

See you all at the October general meeting.

* * *

TV SPORTS: FOOTBALL

from page 4

penalty on your opponent will be accepted or rejected. There should have been an option for the person to do that himself.

- 4) In order for the program to fit on a single-sided disk, Cinemaware deleted some of the non-essential features (like player waving to the camera and the halftime show). These were on the Amiga version, but weren't included in the ST version because of the desire to fit on one disk and some ST owners still own only single-sided drives. If Atari would only have a cheap upgrade of single-sided to double-sided drives (at their cost!) as a thank you to those people who bought the ST in its infancy. Oh well!

I'll bet most anything that the first three of these annoyances were put in because of TVSF's intended audience. That's right, folks, this program may be a domestic product, but the intended customers are over in the UK. I read an ST-Report article recently (#104) about a customer that called Cinemaware tech support and got that answer. Normally I take 3rd party facts with a grain of salt. However, in this case, the facts fit. First, the instructions, beside the ST players guide, were extremely simplistic. They assumed that you had never seen football before. Also, no real players names were used. The teams were supposedly "patterned" after the pros, but I hope that in future League disks (the program asks you to insert your league disk, the only one out now is on the program disk) actual names of pro players (with approximate abilities) will be used.

Overall I found the game highly playable and the excellent graphics added to the enjoyment. If you're looking purely for a statistical football game, then this isn't what you're looking for. However, if you want to play a decent game of football against a friend, then this program is right up your alley.

Food for Thought
from page 6

retailers like Computer Software Center, Mayfair, and Micro Magic must contend with. Sometimes the difference in price is just too great, you say.

No matter, the only way to insure that our local merchants continue to carry Atari products and software is to support them. Period. No way around it. I've spoken to the local merchants, and frankly, Atari sales are soft. Not good news. Either we start buying locally or we lose the local support we now have.

Is Atari really back?

Well, your guess is as good as mine on this one. I try to keep up on all the latest info off the online and hard copy Atari magazines, and one thing is for certain, there is a lot of hype about Atari making a come back, Atari advertising nationally, and Atari concentrating on the US market. I've always believed that actions speak louder than words. Atari is coming out with new products, but I have to wonder how you can sell product without advertising.

I am personally disgusted by the Nintendo craze. Years back Atari was a

household word, but Nintendo has replaced the fuji in the American dictionary. I am most disappointed by the fact that Nintendo is a Japanese company, while Atari is right here in the old USA. Not to mention the well known fact that the Atari line is far superior to any of its competitors.

Well, what Atari does or does not do is really of no consequence to us or our user group. Think about it...we've already bought our computers! What difference does it really make if Atari sells a million more ST's and/or 8-bits or a thousand? Obviously there is a difference when it comes to future support by 3rd party developers, (and Atari for that matter) but if you haven't already noticed, there is enough stuff out there right now to keep about 99.9% of us busy for the next 10 years.

What is our business, and what we should be worrying about is how to get the most out of our current system. That is why we joined this user group, and that is what we should be concentrating on doing. If some of the writers out there would spend more time on writing educational and informational articles on their machines, or on their favorite utility, it would be much more

beneficial to the Atari community than all the Atari bashing and speculating that is going on. I like reading the rumor mills as much as the next guy, but I would rather read an article on how to put together a newsletter for my cub scout meeting Thursday night than some of the stuff I see in the national mags.

I guess the point I'm trying to make is that while it is easy to get caught up in who's who in Sunnyvale, I really believe that our efforts belong right here at home, with our members, helping each other use our computers the way we dreamed of the day we brought them home from the store.

What does this all mean to the MilAtari members? It means you should support your local dealer, your local user group, and your American developers. Don't forget to support Atari Corp. as well, by providing input and constructive criticism, as well as and perhaps most importantly, credit when credit is due. Perhaps we'll be fortunate enough to witness a resurgence into this MS-DOS/Nintendo marketplace by the company we all know should be #1, Atari!

PacMania
from page 7

how does it play? Quite nicely, thank you! Pac-Man is very easy to control with the joystick. In the lower levels, the ghosts are fairly slow and not very aggressive. However, in the upper levels, watch out for the ghost with the scowl. If he locks on to you, he'll follow you almost relentlessly, and he is definitely faster than you are. The only ways to outfox him are to make a lot of turns to throw him off the scent (works occasionally) or to get to a power pill in time. He alone puts a lot of challenge into the higher levels.

The graphics are colorful and very well detailed. The simulation of 3-D is deftly executed and quite effective. And the games are accompanied by some of the catchiest background tunes that I have ever encountered in a

videogame.

Cute little touches are scattered throughout the game. For example, when you jump over a ghost, his eyes follow you as you go over him. Also, before each round, you are treated to a little intermission cartoon. And finally, each game can consist of two credits, which means that you can pick up where you left off (one time per game) if you lose all of your lives.

There is only one thing that I don't like about the game. When a large number of ghosts first appear on the screen, the great increase in graphics processing causes the on-screen action to slow down temporarily. This is noticeable, but not a major drawback.

To me, this game was a great blast from the past with the look of

today. It doesn't take a lot of thought - just boot it up, tune out the rest of the world and keep moving! If you like the arcade classics, treat yourself to this immensely entertaining sequel.

One additional note - this game is a European import that I bought from Mayfair Computers. Just recently, the Brown Deer store put quite a number of European games on their shelves. Rumor has it that Europeans are not as particular about their software as Americans, and, as a result, European software tends to be "buggier" than American software. Well, I am pleased to report that, so far, the game has performed flawlessly. And I would like to thank Mayfair Computers for starting to make European software available through the retail marketplace. Here's hoping to see more of this in the future.

Dennis Wilson

ST PD Update

MilAtari Ltd. St Public Domain Library Disks are available to members at a price of \$3.50 per disk, and to non-members at \$5 per disk. The charge for the disks covers the cost of the media and handling, with all proceeds going to support the activities of MilAtari Ltd.

Some of the programs on these disks have been released as shareware and are so documented in the programs themselves. MilAtari Ltd. supports the shareware concept and you are encouraged to make donations to the individual authors should you find their programs useful.

The MilAtari PD Libraries are intended to provide a repository for useful and interesting programs, and each file is tested before inclusion on the disk. We believe that each file is worthy of your consideration. No warranty is expressed nor implied, however, as to their content or usability. Defective disks will be gladly replaced. These disks are made available for sale at the monthly club meeting and may be ordered in advance by posting a message in the Library Lounge room on the club BBS. Other arrangements only by prior contact with the ST PD Librarian. We do not mail order disks at this time. Librarians of other clubs are encouraged to contact our ST Librarian concerning trading of programs in their respective libraries.

DISK 226 - UTILITYDISK

ADBASE: Address Base is a dedicated address book program for keeping names and numbers. It has a upper limit of 400 records and saves its files in regular ASCII text. For speed of loading and saving, records may be kept in smaller groups by type.

JCLOCK8D: JClock8d installs a tiny (less than 1200 bytes) interrupt handler that displays an am/pm style clock in the upper right hand corner of the ST screen. The "am" or "pm" will display as "AM" or "PM" when CapsLock is on. The clock remains on-screen thru all known programs and can be used in any screen resolution. The display can be turned on or off at any time (in any program) with a special keystroke.

DITTO II: This 105k text file is a reprint of the Atari Roundtable discussion on Genie concerning the PC Ditto II MS-DOS (i.e. IBM) emulator hardware enhancement for the ST. If you are thinking about buying this product, first read this file to learn about its capabilities as of the initial release, and the planned updates to its software.

MGWRITER: A version of the popular word processor ST Writer which is designed for children or the visually impaired. Text is printed to the screen in extra big letters.

DISK 217 - UTILITYDISK

ARC521B: ARC.TTP Ver 5.21B - Updated and improved versions of ARC 5.21 and MARC 5.21. Both versions feature larger buffers for file buffering, which greatly improves speed, the bug in ARC 5.21 that allows an archive to be built that is larger than the sum of its included files has been fixed; and the original wild card expansion algorithm has been reinstated ("*.*" means ALL files again, not just files with extensions).

ARCSHL20: ARC Shell is a GEM program which is designed to work with the popular ST archiving utility ARC.TTP. Essentially, ARC Shell adds a GEM interface to the ARC program, letting you point and click to select the various options instead of typing a command line. This version is compatible with the ARC.TTP Ver 5.21 which, as indicated above, is also on this disk. It is also compatible with the LHARC format (i.e. Archive files with .LZH extensions).

PERIODIC: If you need to look up information from the Periodic Table of Elements often, then you will find this very helpful. Included on the disk are two versions, a program version and an accessory version.

ZMDM: Z Modem Ver 1.85 - A command line type modem program which was derived from rz/sz for Unix. Many improvements have been made from the previous version.

DISK 228 - GAME DISK

GUESSKH: Guess-A-Sketch - A computerized version of the board game "Pictionary". It is designed for 4 players on 2 teams. You can choose to play on a board with 39, 63, or 71 spaces. An 18k word file is included along with a word file editor for creating your own word files.

ORBIT: A very good Breakout type game in compiled STOS Basic. It has 20 screens, a high score save, and an editor.

DISK 229 - GAME DISK

BLASTER: A colorful (i.e. not vector graphics) PD version of "Defender", a game, the object of which is to protect your men from the evil grabbers. They swoop down and pick up your men. You can save them by shooting the grabber and intercepting the man before it hits the ground. If a grabber reaches the top of the screen with a man, it will become a mutant. If all men are stolen or shot accidentally, unfortunate things

ST PD Update
from previous page.

happen.

FUNFACE: Not a game, but playing with it can be as much fun as playing your favorite game. This is a working demo of a program where you assemble a face from menus of facial parts. You can then "move" the parts (e.g. raising or lowering the placement of the ears) around to create more variations.

SPACEFLT: A first-person from behind-the-fighter viewpoint game where the object is to blast anything and everything which is rushing toward you. A game made with STOS BASIC.

DISK 230 - GAME DISK

BLOODAXE: A text-only Dungeons-and-Dragons role-playing game.

JOTTO: A game where you try to guess the 5-letter mystery word. You will be told the number of matches or "jots" for your guess (i.e. the total number of letters your guess has in common with the answer). Only legal 5-letter words can be used.

JEOPARDY: Jeopardy Ver 1.1 - A computerized version of "Jeopardy". Included are a game creator and 12 full 61 question game files, plus a partial file, "KIDSGAME" of 30 questions which you can complete yourself. This is a colorful, low resolution version of the game.

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ST PD Supplementary Update

DISK 031 GAME DISK (DS ONLY)

AWG.GME: (Another Word Game) This game is for 1 or 2 players, in low-rez color. Each game consists of 3 rounds of hangman, with a bonus round between each, and a challenge round. When there are 2 players, only the high scorer for the preceding round plays the bonus. In the bonus round you must figure out a phrase as soon as possible, as letters are displayed one by one. In the challenge round you must unscramble as many words as you can in the specified time limit. A hint option is available in the hangman rounds. There are over 400 word/phrases built into the program which are picked at random.

PILEUP: The basic premise of the game is similar to TETRIS. You must guide various blocks down the screen and try to fit them together as closely as possible as they pile up. If you fit together a layer without leaving any spaces, then that layer will collapse. If you collapse enough layers, then you will advance to the next level. If the pile of blocks reaches the top, then the game is over. There are 10 levels to complete to win the game with the option of starting on levels 1-4. There are 2 skill levels, either using just the basic blocks or with an additional two items - a nasty diamond shaped block and a helpful bomb. The game is played using a joy stick.

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